



Fact Sheet:

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWORKs)



CalWORKs

California's welfare reform program is named CalWORKs. This program implements the provisions of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193). One of the guiding principles of the CalWORKs program is to allow counties flexibility in designing their respective programs to best meet local needs and formulate the most effective strategies in assisting individuals to move from welfare to work.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Funding for CalWORKs

In Fiscal Year 2004-2005, \$48 million has been appropriated for substance abuse services and \$58 million has been appropriated for mental health services. The purpose of these funds is to provide necessary services for CalWORKs participants to obtain and retain employment. Counties have the flexibility of transferring these funds between mental health and substance abuse services in order to meet their needs.

The California Department of Finance reports annually to the Legislature on the extent these funds have been utilized.

Substance Abuse Services

CalWORKs provides guidelines for the provision of substance abuse treatment services for the State's welfare-to-work population. The county welfare director and the county alcohol and drug administrator

determine the availability of services and the process for delivering services.

The counties' existing networks of alcohol and drug treatment providers are accessed to provide substance abuse treatment for CalWORKs participants.

In instances where the existing county alcohol and drug network is unable to provide necessary treatment services, participants may be referred to a state-licensed or certified nonprofit substance abuse program under contract with the county welfare department.

Mental Health Services

CalWORKs also provides guidelines for the provision of mental health services for the State's welfare-to-work population. The county plan, developed jointly by the county welfare department and the county mental health department, shall have a goal of treating the mental or emotional disabilities that may limit or impair the ability of a participant to make the transition from welfare to sustained employment, or limit or impair the participant's ability to retain long-term employment.

In cases where a secondary diagnosis of substance abuse is made for a person referred for mental or emotional disorders, his or her welfare-to-work plan shall also address any substance abuse treatment needs.